

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 MILAN 00396 161828Z  
ACTION MED-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 OES-07 EPA-01 PA-01 /025 W  
-----010302 162027Z /46

R 161530Z MAR 78  
FM AMCONSUL MILAN  
TO SECSTATE 5904  
INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

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EO 11652: NA  
TAGS: SENV AMED IT  
SUBJECT: MILAN DRINKING WATER

REF: STATE 062491

1. CONSULATE WAS CONTACTED ON WATER POLLUTION PROBLEM BY JOURNALIST WORKING FOR MCGRAW HILL. HOWEVER, WE DID NOT RPT NOT SAY THAT QUOTE EPA HAD TOLD THE MILAN CITY COUNCIL TO BOIL ALL THE WATER IN THE CITY. UNQUOTE. WE DID SAY THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE WITH ADVICE OF EPA HAD RECOMMENDED THAT US GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES HERE BOIL THEIR WATER AND THAT WE HAD INFORMED CITY COUNCILMAN OF THIS RECOMMENDATION. WE ALSO SENT JOURNALIST COPY OF OUR PUBLIC STATEMENT.

2. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY PROVIDED DEPT WITH TEXTS OF OUCT PUBLIC STATEMENT FOR ITS CLEARANCE (MILAN 0288, STATE 044909) WE REPEAT FULL STATEMENT HERE TO BE SURE THAT ALL CONCERNED IN DEPT. HAVE FULL PACKAGE. FIRST IS STATEMENT WHICH WILL BE PUBLISHED IN AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND FOREIGNERS' CLUB NEWSLETTER NEXT MONTH. SECOND IS STATEMENT WHICH WE HAVE ALREADY MADE AVAILABLE TO THOSE REQUESTING IT. SO FAR, THERE HAS BEEN NO NOTICE TAKEN OF OUR STATEMENT HERE.

3. SEVERAL ARTICLES HAVE APPEARED IN LOCAL NEWSPAPERS

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WHICH DISCUSS TRICHLOROETHYLENE, CHLOROFORM, AND CARBON TETRACHLORIDE POLLUTION IN MILAN'S DRINKING WATER. THE UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY HAS STATED THAT THESE CHEMICALS MAY BE POTENTIALLY HARMFUL AT CERTAIN LEVELS IF INGESTED OVER A PERIOD OF YEARS. HOWEVER, NO PERMISSIBLE SAFE LEVELS FOR THIS CATEGORY OF CHEMICALS HAVE

BEEN DESIGNATED. A FEDERAL STANDARD FOR ONE GROUP OF CHEMICALS IN THIS CATEGORY WHICH INCLUDES CHLOROFORM IS BEING PROPOSED BY THE E.P.A. THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE HAS RECOMMENDED THAT THE SAFEST MEANS FOR A HOUSEHOLD TO ASSURE THAT THESE VOLATILE CONTAMINANTS ARE AT ACCEPTABLE LEVELS IS BY BOILING DRINKING WATER FOR 5 MINUTES IN AN UNCOVERED CONTAINER. THE MILAN CITY GOVT HAS PROVIDED THE CONSULATE WITH A SUMMARY OF THE CITY'S DRINKING WATER PROBLEM. COPIES OF THIS LETTER ARE AVAILABLE AT THE CONSULATE GENERAL (PIAZZA DELLA REPUBBLICA 32).

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL  
MARCH 6, 1978

4. SEVERAL ARTICLES HAVE APPEARED IN LOCAL NEWSPAPERS WHICH DISCUSS TRICHLOROETHYLENE, CHLOROFORM, AND CARBON TETRACHLORIDE POLLUTION IN MILAN'S DRINKING WATER. THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY IN WASHINGTON INFORMS US THAT SOME OF THESE CHEMICALS ARE POLLUTING THE WATER SUPPLIES OF MANY AMERICAN COMMUNITIES AS WELL AND THAT BOILING THE DRINKING WATER IN AN UNCOVERED CONTAINER WILL EVAPORATE MOST OR ALL OF THESE VOLATILE CONTAMINANTS. THE DEPT OF STATE RECOMMENDS A BRISK FIVE MINUTE BOIL. IN RESPONSE TO OUR INQUIRE, MILAN'S ALDERMAN FOR ECOLOGY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SENT US A SUMMARY OF THE CITY'S WATER PROBLEM.

THE TEXT OF ASSESSORE ERCOLE FERRARIO'S LETTER FOLLOWS:

JAN 26, 1978

"DEAR MR. FINA:

"IN REFERENCE TO MY EARLIER CONVERSATIONS WITH YOU AND YOUR STAFF CONCERNING DRINKING WATER POLLUTION IN MILAN, I ASSURE YOU THAT THE CITY GOVERNMENT IS GIVING MAXIMUM ATTENTION TO THIS PROBLEM. THE PROVINCIAL HEALTH AND SANITATION LABORATORIES CONDUCT ON-GOING ANALYSES OF THE WATER FROM THE CITY'S WELLS. A WELL IS SHUT DOWN WHENEVER THE CONCENTRATION OF THE COMBINED CONTAMINANTS EXCEEDS THE MAXIMUM LEVEL SET BY A COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS. TRICHLOROETHYLENE AND, IN SMALLER CONCENTRATIONS, CHLOROFORM ARE TWO OF THE PRINCIPAL CONTAMINANTS. THE FIRST IS SUSPECTED AND THE SECOND STRONGLY SUSPECTED OF BEING CARCINOGENIC. THE POLLUTION

APPARENTLY ORIGINATES FROM SOLVENTS USED BY INDUSTRY,  
PARTICULARLY METAL WORKING FIRMS. WHILE WE KNOW  
THAT THESE TWO CHLORINATED HYDROCARBONS IN THEIR  
PRESENT CONCENTRATIONS DO NOT PRESENT ANY IMMEDIATE  
HEALTH HAZARD, WE DO NOT YET KNOW IF THEY MIGHT  
CREATE PROBLEMS IN THE LONGER TERM. TO STUDY  
THE CHRONIC EFFECTS OF LONG TERM INGESTION OF  
MILAN DRINKING WATER, TOXOLOGICAL AND EPIDEMIO-  
LOGICAL STUDIES HAVE BEEN BEGUN BY THE UNIVERSITY.

"LET ME POINT OUT THAT THE LEVEL OF CONTAMINANTS  
IN DRINKING WATER AT THE TAP IS ABOUT 15 TO 20  
PERCENT BELOW THE MAXIMUM SET BY OUR COMMITTEE OF  
EXPERTS, AND THAT THE CITY GOVERNMENT IS ACTING  
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WITH EXTREME CARE TO AVOID ANY DANGER TO THE  
HEALTH OF CITY RESIDENTS.  
SINCERELY, ERCOLE V. FERRARIO"  
FINA

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
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